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Medical Terminology
Final Project
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Cushing Syndrome

The disease I have chosen to discuss for my final project is Cushing Syndrome. It is an endocrine disorder stimulating from a tumor in the pituitary gland. The gland releases excess cortisol as a result. This disease was discovered by Dr. Cushing in 1932. His first encounter with it was from a patient with symptoms of Cushing's in 1912. The diagnosis was disputed for years.

Cushing Syndrome is when the body creates too much cortisol. Cortisol is a stress hormone. The overproduction is usually caused by a tumor in the pituitary gland, but it can also occur from medications such as oral corticosteroid.

Signs and symptoms of Cushing Syndrome are obesity, with fat accumulation focusing around the midsection and neck. Skin may have acne, stretch marks, redness, fragility with cuts and bruises that are slow to heal. Other side effects include abnormal menstrual cycle in women, and low sex drive in men. Cushing syndrome can also cause high blood pressure, bone loss, and type 2 Diabetes. (Which happens to be another endocrine disorder.)

The disorder is usually diagnosed through a series of physical examinations, and tests. "Tests used include: 24-hour urine test for cortisol; measurement of late-night cortisol levels in the blood and saliva; low dose dexamethasone suppression test (LDDST) which evaluates the cortisol response to a low dose of a synthetic glucocorticoid (dexamethasone)." (NORD, 2020)

If Cushing is being caused by medication, the best treatment is to then get the medication dose lowered for the patient. If the disease is caused by a pituitary tumor, a patient may get the tumor removed. Cortisol replacement medication will have to be administered to the patient to

get the levels right, which may take up to a year. If surgery does not work for the patient, the next step is then radiation therapy. If surgery and radiation fail, doctors use medication as treatment. “Medications to control excessive production of cortisol at the adrenal gland include ketoconazole, mitotane (Lysodren) and metyrapone (Metopirone).” (Mayo, 2018)

REFERENCES

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